

SUSPENSION BILLS: MAJOR POLICY DECISIONS BY THE LEADERSHIP OF THE MAJORITY PARTY

(Mr. BURGESS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I came to the floor of the House this morning to talk about energy. But I just want to say a word about what was just discussed.

We have had major policy decisions in health care come to the floor of this House, not through my Subcommittee on Health in Energy and Commerce, not through the full Committee on Energy and Commerce. No. It comes directly from the Speaker's Office to the floor of the House. It comes up under suspension because who wants to vote against health? Who wants to vote against doctors?

But the reality is major changes in public policy are going on with no discussion in committee, no ability to amend or improve a bill on the floor of the House, no ability to offer an alternative before we vote because they are brought up under suspension.

This is wrong and this is indicative of the type of leadership that this House has had for the last 20 months. This is what the American people say they want changed. When they talk about change, they're talking about change from the top, and it's high time it happened.

DEMOCRATS LOOK TO JUMP-START THE BUSH ECONOMY BY PASSING SECOND ECONOMIC RECOVERY PLAN

(Mr. PERLMUTTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, you can put lipstick on the failed Bush-McCain policies, but they are still the same old Bush-McCain policies. And those Bush-McCain policies have led our Nation into a recession. Americans need a new direction and a change.

Since taking control of Congress last year, congressional Democrats have been working to rebuild the Bush-McCain economy and help families struggling to make ends meet. We started by enacting the first increase in the Federal minimum wage in almost a decade, directly helping an estimated 5.3 million Americans and setting a new wage floor for another 7.2 million lower wage workers. When it's fully phased in, the pay raise will place an additional \$4,400 in the paychecks of these workers. This year we extended assistance to unemployed workers who are having a difficult time finding a job in a Bush-McCain economy that is simply not producing jobs. Now we are preparing to introduce a new economic package that will invest in America and create new jobs.

Mr. Speaker, Congress cannot afford to wait to jump-start this economy. We must act this month.

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LET'S NOT BEG OPEC

(Mr. TERRY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TERRY. Yesterday, OPEC met. OPEC decided to cut production because they were frustrated that the price per barrel was nearing the \$100 per barrel price. My goodness. What a tragedy for them. Isn't it a problem for this country that we rely so heavily on foreign oil? OPEC controls the majority of oil production. Our energy policy should not have to be begging OPEC for more production.

Yesterday, our electric company that serves my district announced they're raising the rates because the train company that hauls the coal to them had to raise their rates because the price of diesel fuel has gone up so much. So the electrical rates of every consumer, every household in Omaha, is going to have double digit inflation on their electric bill.

Please, Mr. Speaker, let the madness stop. Let's do a real energy bill.

THEY PUT US IN THIS SITUATION

(Mr. MORAN of Virginia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, for the last 8 years, our President and Vice President the founder of Bush Oil Exploration and the former CEO of Halliburton, the world's largest oil servicing firm, have had this country focused almost exclusively on drilling for fossil fuels, the use of oil and gas to power our economy. This administration issued 40,000 permits for drilling on public land onshore, and made 300 million acres offshore available to oil and gas companies. They still have 68 million acres of proven reserves that they are not drilling on.

But what is the focus now? Let's go after that last remaining 20 percent, even though it's the most environmentally sensitive, even though it will devastate the tourism industry and fishing industry of several states. Let's go after that. That's the answer. Forget the fact that we opposed research into solar power, cutting it by 80 percent, cutting wind power research and opposing more fuel efficient engines.

They put us in this situation, and now they want more of the same. And they're wrong.

A RESPONSIBLE ENERGY POLICY MUST INCLUDE SOLAR TAX CREDITS

(Ms. GIFFORDS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. GIFFORDS. There are three big problems that face America today. First, our dependence on foreign oil; second, climate change; and third,

America's innovation and the fact that we are not as competitive as this country needs to be. One of the best solutions to these three major problems is solar energy.

The investment tax credit, Mr. Speaker, the ITC, will expire at the end of the year. At home in southern Arizona and across this great Nation, free energy radiates from the sky almost every day of the year. Across my district, residents, businesses, utilities, and individuals are all working to do their part to take advantage of that sunshine. But major projects, large projects, but also small projects, will not move forward without the extension of the ITC.

Southern Arizonans are willing to do their part. We here in Congress have to do ours by working across party lines and working in the Senate to ensure that the ITC is extended. This is critical for our country, for our competitiveness, for climate change, and for ending our dependency on foreign oil.

I urge my colleagues to work together to pass the ITC.

HOUSE DEMOCRATS CONTINUE TO SUPPORT BILLS THAT PROVIDE AMERICANS RELIEF AT THE PUMP

(Mr. STUPAK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, back in 2003, congressional Republicans supported the Bush-Cheney energy bill that was written in secret by Big Oil. And, boy, are we paying.

Three years later, we have record prices for consumers and record profits for the oil companies. Since taking control of Congress last year, Democrats have worked hard to reverse these failed energy policies.

For the first time in 32 years, we increased the fuel efficiency standards for vehicles so they will be more efficient, which will save Americans about \$1,000 a year. We also made a historic commitment to investing in biofuels and increasing domestic oil supply and drill responsibly.

This is a good start, but more needs to be done. That's why House Democrats brought eight pieces of legislation up in July to cut the high cost of gas, and Republicans opposed every one of those bills.

Mr. Speaker, it's time for House Republicans to work with us Democrats to provide the American people lower costs at the pump and lower costs in the grocery store by ending the excessive Wall Street speculation in our energy markets and increasing our energy and food costs. Mr. Speaker, it's time to end the manipulation of prices by Wall Street and the excessive speculation, to lower prices and save this American economy.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair